United Nations A/70/131

General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 July 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Items 20 and 125 of the preliminary list*

Sustainable development

Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Note verbale dated 26 June 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in its capacity as Chair of the Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, has the honour to forward herewith to the General Assembly the text (in English and French) of the Hanoi Declaration, adopted by the 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held in Hanoi on 31 March 2015 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations kindly requests the Office of the Secretary-General to circulate the present note verbale and its annex as a document of the seventieth session of the General Assembly, under items 20 and 125 of the preliminary list.

* A/70/50.

15-11158 (E) 090715

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Annex to the note verbale dated 26 June 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Hanoi Declaration

The Sustainable Development Goals: Turning Words into Action

Endorsed by the 132nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Hanoi, 1 April 2015)

We, parliamentarians from over 130 countries and 23 international and regional parliamentary organizations, gathered in Hanoi, Viet Nam, reviewed the emerging sustainable development goals and considered our role in attaining them.

This is our declaration.

Despite global advances in technology, health, knowledge and material wealth, longstanding economic and social disparities are increasing, to the detriment of the whole planet, with progress continuing to elude many the world over.

This situation — exacerbated by the urgent threat of climate change and growing waves of social unrest, political instability and conflict within or between countries — is coming to a head. As we saw with the Millennium Development Goals, international commitments can only be met with strong political will, leadership and national ownership. As parliamentarians, we have a moral obligation to act.

The adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and its sustainable development goals in September 2015 will afford a unique opportunity to meet global challenges, using a universal, integrated approach that will apply to all countries and link poverty eradication to sustainable development.

Vision

At this critical moment, we, the parliamentarians of the world, reaffirm our vision for people-centred sustainable development based on the realization of all human rights, to eradicate poverty in all its forms and eliminate inequalities, thus empowering all individuals to exercise their full potential. This requires conditions of peace and security, in full observance of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Poverty eradication and sustainable development are a shared commitment for us all, and we should all strive for a balanced and more equitable distribution of resources. Our current production and consumption patterns are clearly unsustainable, and all countries — developed and developing alike — need to work together, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. That

is the only way we can advance towards a common model of inclusive and sustainable growth.

A people-centred approach requires environmental justice: the planet and all its ecosystems must be treated as common assets for the whole of humanity to enjoy now and in the future. Human well-being must be the driver of all policies for sustainable development, and progress must be measured in terms that go well beyond gross domestic product. People are more than taxpayers and consumers; they are citizens endowed with rights and responsibilities towards each other. We must invest in them — their health, nutrition, education and skills — as our most important resource.

All government institutions must be representative and accessible to all. Cultural differences should be respected and home-grown approaches to sustainable development employed. All people, regardless of gender, race, culture, religion and health status, must be empowered to work cooperatively for peace and the common good.

Commitment

Acknowledging that the sustainable development goals will be the result of a delicate compromise, we look forward to this transformational framework that will inspire policymaking in all countries.

We are pleased that our efforts to advocate for the inclusion of goals on healthy lives and well-being, gender equality and women's empowerment, reducing inequalities within and between countries, as well as on governance, have borne fruit. We appreciate the broadened focus on health, which will provide an opportunity to end the AIDS epidemic while tackling emerging challenges such as non-communicable diseases.

We welcome the new goal calling for urgent action against climate change and we appreciate the broad-based goal on the means of implementation — finance, trade, technology, capacity-building and systemic reforms — that must be mobilized in support of the new framework. This goal should inject new energy into the current global partnership for development.

We commit to doing our utmost to strengthen national ownership of the goals, particularly by making them known to our constituents. People must understand how the goals are relevant to their lives. As representatives of the people, we are responsible for ensuring that each and every voice is heard in the political process without discrimination and irrespective of social status.

We commit to translating the goals into enforceable domestic laws and regulations, including through the critical budget process. Each country must do its part to ensure that all the goals are met.

Action

As parliamentarians, we must support efforts to reach the new goals in ways that respect each country's national specificities. Our responsibility is clear: to hold Governments accountable for the goals they have subscribed to, and to make sure that enabling laws are passed and budgets adopted.

Our first order of business must be to examine our institutions and decision-making processes to ensure that they are fit for purpose.

As representatives of the people, our concern is to defend the public interest and pursue the common good above all else. We must prevent individual interests from exercising excessive influence in our deliberations. We must focus on building consensus around practical solutions.

We will seek to overcome the silo mentality within our own parliaments and national administrations to reflect the intersectoral nature of the goals. To this end, we will do our utmost to institutionalize the goals in every parliament, with sufficient time for discussion and monitoring. Parliamentary committees and processes must pursue all goals coherently.

We will help build national ownership of the goals by seeing to it that each of our countries has a sustainable development plan, crafted in an inclusive and participatory manner, including through public hearings with civil society, and in line with the international human rights framework.

We pledge to make laws and budgetary provisions in line with the national sustainable development plan, clearly identifying the goals and targets that apply and means of funding. Governments should report annually to parliaments on the implementation of the national plan. Parliaments should garner regular feedback from their constituents to help assess progress on the ground, where it matters most.

We further pledge to measure progress not only in terms of national averages, but most importantly by looking at how the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our societies have fared. No one should be left behind. Strong national capacities for data collection and disaggregation, including by gender, age, minority group and health status, will be crucial.

Recognizing our role in mobilizing the means to attain the goals, including through funding from private and public sources, at both the national and international levels, we will support the implementation of all international commitments. In particular, we will work to increase domestic resources, including by combating illicit financial flows. We will improve the quality and quantity of aid, set out an orderly sovereign debt restructuring mechanism, strengthen the environment for private sector investments, including through public-private partnerships, and reform the global financial, monetary and trade regime in ways that directly support sustainable development.

Lastly, we pledge to support accountability for meeting the goals at the global level. We will seek to join our national delegations to meetings of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, where global progress reports will be discussed. We will contribute to the national reviews submitted to the United Nations high-level political forum on sustainable development. Wherever feasible, we will seek to engage with United Nations field operations in our countries to share information and explore all avenues for cooperation to advance our national plans.

We ask that the central messages of this Declaration and of its predecessor, the Quito Communiqué, be reflected in the outcome of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament later this year, which will in turn provide input to the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

We urge Governments to conduct negotiations keeping in mind the real needs and expectations of citizens and addressing the critical linkages between sustainable development, democratic governance and human rights. The post-2015 United Nations declaration should commit to building strong public institutions, including parliaments, with the ability and capacity to ensure accountability for results. We encourage the drafters of the declaration to acknowledge the critical role and responsibility of parliaments — and of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as their world organization — in implementing the new development agenda and in monitoring progress.

Moreover, we stress that convergence between the outcomes of this year's negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, financing for development, climate change and disaster risk reduction is essential to facilitate implementation at the national level.

We are profoundly grateful to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, our world organization, for raising our awareness of the sustainable development goals and for making our voices heard at the United Nations. We will continue to look to the Inter-Parliamentary Union for support in our efforts to attain the goals.

Together, we will succeed.